

SECURITY INFORMATION
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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1. The Songjin (129-12, 40-40) (EA 1701) Normal College¹ had approximately 1,000 students and 40 instructors in July 1949. Graduates of its two-year course, like those of similar colleges at Wonsan, Ch'ong-jin, Haeju, and Sinuiju, were qualified to teach in North Korean high schools, while graduates of the three-year normal college course of the Pyongyang City Normal College were granted licenses to teach in higher schools.² Six courses of instruction were offered the students at Songjin: literature, geography, Russian language, mathematics, chemistry, and biology. There were about 200 students in each department, except for geography and chemistry, which had about 80 students each. The Russian language and Communist Party history were required subjects in each curriculum.

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3. Politically the school was well organized. In addition to the college party committee, there were ten net committees, among them a faculty net, maintenance staff net, management net, and department net. Some overt organizations were the Democratic Youth College Committee, Women's Alliance, Fatherland Security Supporters Committee, Korean-Soviet Cultural Association College Committee, Patriotic Fighters Supporters Committee, Trade Union Committee, and the University Press Society. The open and frequent observation of classroom instruction and conduct by party and youth alliance officials was disliked by many students; and both the faculty and the students complained of the lack of qualified instructors. Most of the instructors were employed for their political views and accomplishments rather than their professional skill.
4. Demands made by the majority of the students were generally accepted by school authorities if they did not run contrary to the policies or activities of the North Korean Labor Party. Disciplining of students for various reasons, including absence from school and failure to complete assigned studies or extra-curricular duties, was classified into these categories, depending on the offense: advice, reprimand, warning, severe warning, dismissal from membership in college organizations, dismissal from school. Students were not permitted to quit the college voluntarily. The state examinations held immediately before graduation of the students was conducted by the North Korean Ministry of Education, which dispatched its officials directly to the school to examine the students orally on the subjects of instruction. This oral examination was attended by officials of the Labor Party and of governmental and social organizations.
5. Three lecture classes were held daily, each lasting for 90 minutes. Although Sunday was officially a holiday, political and other college meetings and collective labor activities in mines, on farms, and on the college campus were generally held on that day. There were other meetings daily throughout the week. The school successfully employed the system of superior students personally guiding inferior students. A defect in the scholastic standards of the college, however, was the fact that the oral examination could be weighted heavily to favor certain students. A below-average student could be made a cum-laude graduate if the examiners and the faculties agreed, and since no written records were made of the oral examinations, they were frequently unfairly graded. Some students also objected to the emphasis placed upon indoctrination in Communist ideology, which prevented them from devoting sufficient time to their major subject of interest.

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1. ☐ Comment. The original report refers to the school also as the "Chongjin" Normal College; however, since the contact was a Songjin resident and the text indicates that Songjin Normal College is meant, the latter is presumably correct.

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2. ☐ Comment. These "higher schools" are not further identified..

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